Indoor Air Quality Standards and Regulations in Europe
Exposure Limit Values in Sweden

CONSULTANT'S REPORT

Criteria Group

In Sweden exposure limit values are set by the Regulations Group of Arbetarskyddsstyrelsen, the National Board of Occupational Safety and Health. Preliminary work is carried out by the Criteria Group at the Arbestsmedicinska Institutet (Institute of Occupational Health) which studies and evaluates the scientific literature available on each substance and assigns a specialist to produce a draft report. The draft is then discussed by the entire Criteria Group which approves the version transmitted to the Regulations Group. Reports of the Criteria Group are published by the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health in its series Aberte och Hälsa (Work and Health).

Criteria Group reports contain data on the reported medical effects of each substance, including dose-response, uptake through the skin and sensitisation. The teratogenic and carcinogenic properties of the substance are also considered. The reports reflect the group's opinion of the likely critical effects in the occupational environment and suggest acceptable exposure limits.

The Swedish Criteria Group works in close co-operation with a Nordic Expert Group which is composed of scientists from Denmark, Finland, and Norway as well as from Sweden. Dr Per Lundberg of Sweden is currently the secretary of both the national Criteria Group and the Nordic Expert Group. In recent years the Swedish group has adopted reports drafted by experts chosen by the Nordic Group and approved by that group. Documents of the Nordic Group are prepared in English and translated into Swedish and the other Scandinavian languages once approved. The Swedish Criteria Group also co-operates with similar groups in the Netherlands, Germany and the UK. Attempts at co-operation with NIOSH in the United States have apparently been less successful.

Current Priorities

The priority list of the Swedish Criteria Group currently contains ten substances:

Methyl Chloride
Glutaric Aldehyde
Nickel
Selenium
Aluminium
Quartz
Diesel Exhaust
Inorganic Acid Aerosols
Butadiene
Ashphalt Fumes

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Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/kfwk0000

Several of these substances have been targeted by the Regulations Group which is due to issue a new list of priorities in the near future.

Regulations Group

Completed reports from the Criteria Group are considered by the Regulations Group whose members include representatives of all interested parties including employers and trades unions. The Regulations Group carries out a cost-benefit analysis on the use of each substance in various occupational sectors, taking into consideration the size of the exposed population, level of exposure, occupational injury statistics, the potential for technical changes within industry and other occupational risks. The group also takes account of the international regulatory situation.

The Regulations Group is usually very cautious in setting limit values for substances with proven allergenic effects. A separate system exists for carcinogens which divides them into three distinct categories. Some are banned outright, some may be used under controlled conditions, while the third group is subject to extremely low exposure limit values. This last category is mainly comprised of substances considered to be present, at low levels, in most modern industrial situations.

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